are thus assured of a good stepfather and will continue to live with their real father's lineage. However, it is not compulsory and the first husband's family can not prevent the widow from marrying an outsider. Childless widows return to their own families and marry whom they please, a new bride price being paid for them. The first husband's family has no claim on this.

The Menabe rarely practice the levirate. It was explained that a man who married his brother's widow would be suspected of having poisoned him to obtain her. However, such marriages are not prohibited and I heard of one or two instances.

Marriage with a deceased wife's sister is permitted by all the Tanala. The ceremony, bride price, etc., are exactly the same as for an outsider and such marriages are neither encouraged nor discouraged.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BRIDE PRICE

Throughout Madagascar it is the payment of a bride price which distinguishes a legal marriage from concubinage. Without it, no amount of ceremony can make a union regular. The price is paid by the husband or his father to the bride's parents and must be paid in full before she is taken to the husband's house. The size of the price varies with the tribe, being highest among the cattle people of the south and west. It is usually fixed by custom and I never heard of two families haggling over it. Among the Tanala Menabe the bride price is so small as to be almost negligible.

The giving of the bride price in no sense constitutes a purchase of the woman herself. She retains full membership in her own gens and lineage and can return to them at any time. Among the Tanala the husband cannot claim a refund even if she deserts him during the betrothal period preceding the final marriage. Among the cattle tribes the husband can demand a refund, but everyone will despise him for doing so. In no case will the wife be returned by her family against her will.

The real significance of the bride price is that, through it, the husband acquires all rights in a woman's potential children. The Malagasy are quite clear on this and it is verified by many bits of native custom and law. Thus the Ikongo say that children formerly belonged to the mother because no bride price was paid. Since they have adopted the custom of paying the bride price, the children belong to the father. The father's exclusive right to the children on a divorce is explained on the same basis. A man who marries a

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woman with an illegitimate child is expected to give the regular bride price and to pay a small sum for the child as well, if he wants it. If he does not, it belongs to the mother's family and is reared by them. 583

The most extreme example of this idea of the purchase of potential children is found among the Vezo Saikalava, a tribe on the southwest coast. Here there is no refund of the bride price in case of divorce, but the consent of the first husband is necessary for a remarriage. He will bargain with the new husband as to how many children born of the new union will be given to him and is entitled to demand from one to three. Such children are considered the first husband's legal heirs, without formality of adoption. Informants said specifically that such children were to reimburse him for the loss of the bride price. [587]

INTER-CLASS MARRIAGE AND INHERITANCE OF RANK

Slavery has been abolished among the Tanala and class distinctions are rapidly breaking down, so that the statements made here refer to past conditions. The native attitude toward inter-class marriages was much like the European one, the higher classes disapproving and the lower approving. Marriages between noble and common and between common and *adevo* were fairly common, but marriages between noble and *adevo* were almost unknown. Noble men frequently had *adevo* concubines. If the mother was a slave, the father would free both her and their child, but would not make her a legal wife. The child's status was doubtful. He would not be considered *adevo*, but the nobles would rarely acknowledge him as a full member of their class and *gens*. Affairs between noble women and *adevo* men were vigorously opposed by the nobles and the *adevo* lover would be sold out of the village or even killed. Informants knew of no offspring from such unions. 582 567 [684]

Marriages between nobles and commoners were not uncommon. The ceremonies were the same as for marriages within either class. Among the Ibongo, children of such unions took the father's rank and *gens*. Among the Menabe they took those of the lower parent.

Marriages between commoners and free *adevo* seem to have been rather frequent. If the *adevo* had been born free and had a family in the village, the ordinary marriage ceremony was performed. The children took the rank and *gens* of the father. Such unions were rather looked down upon and were rarely contracted by any but the poorer commoners.

Matings between commoners and slaves seem to have been regarded more favorably. It must be remembered that many of these